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ABSTRACT

This paper is designed to help youth's significant others harness dissident youth's energy into the reins of society's problems. Included is a comparison between healthy rebellion (arising out of love for something) and neurotic rebellion (having no purpose except to fight conformity or the establishment). The author classifies secondary and college students as adolescents who are beiefly described and then compared to dissident youths. He notes that few student movements have occurred without faculty participation and enumerates three types of students who join in campus violence: (1) a group largely represented by Students for a Democratic Society; (2) an unorganized group concerned with such issues as the American foreign policy in Vietnam, our defense commitments and justice for the black community; and (3) a large group of college students demanding more liberal curriculum goals and improvement in instruction. Listed are several recommendations to channel the energy of dissident youth: (1) the need for institutional change; (2) increased parental responsibility for their children; and (3) administrators who deal with real issues and genuine student involvement. Techniques used to achieve these goals are identified. (Author/MC)

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DISSIDENT YOUTH'S APPEAL

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Dissident youth demand our attention now. Some will not listen even now. They are filled with despair and rage. They feel superior to adults and reject the institutions that their significant others cherish. However, these represent a very small minority. Most youth still have hope, but they will lose it if significant others such as parents, teachers, and relations do not listen to them and help them achieve desired changes.

Most youth recognize the urgency for action concerning pollution, birth control, and human dignity, including genuine brotherhood among all men and the opportunity for all men to work, to develop their potential, to achieve self respect, to participate meaningfully in solving our social problems, and to encourage the development of new and improved diplomatic approaches for securing a lasting peace. Unfortunately, some youth have concluded that desired changes cannot be acheived. Hence, they either have withdrawn and given up or they have decided to destroy the establishment - some for the most idealistic reasons and some for the most selfish, sadistic reasons. Some who act like it is hopeless merely lack the human relations skills and the commitment to work for desired changes. This paper is designed to help youth's significant others harnish youths' energy in society's problems.

If we do not help them, either they will be crushed or contained or possibly will endanger some of our most cherished democratic institutions.

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For example, Bettelheim (1969) fears the behavior of a very small fraction of hostile will help a facist capline control of this nation just as dissident youth helped Hitler capture control of Germany.

Hook (1969) is deeply concerned about these students' demands in determining what should be taught and by whom upon academic freedom:

> "It (academic freedom) is the freedom of professionally qualified individuals to inquire, to discover, to publish and teach the truth as they see it, independently of any controls except the standards by which conclusions of truths are established in the professional discipline (p. 40)."
>
> "This (students' rights to make these determinations) will definitely spell the end of academic freedom. If the faculties of this country do not organize themselves now to resist this mass assault against the principles of academic freedom, the end result will be the politicalization of the American university in the style of the universities of Asia and South America, many of which have politicalized to a point where little study actually takes place."
>
> "It is not accidental that when South American and Asian students want a thorough education in any particular field they go to other countries. What they can get at their own institutions is a political education - and a partisan one at that (p. 41)."

This paper describes these youth briefly, tries to determine what they want, and suggest some approaches that their significant others (e.g. parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators) can use to enlist the assistance of all youth in solving our common social problems.

Healthy vs. Neurotic Rebellion

For many rebellious youth no one has ever taught them to accept limits, to feel responsible for their behavior, to achieve independence, and to become involved in solving the problems which they recognized in their homes, schools, churches, and neighborhoods. Nevertheless, youth want to do something to improve their situation. When they meet resistence, they become reactive. They fight for what they perceive to be their rights. When other more acceptable approaches fail they demonstrate,

strike, and riot to call social problems to the attention of the establishment.

When rebellion has no purpose except to fight conformity or to revolt against the establishment and all the traditions of the past, it is a neurotic reaction to authority. Healthy rebellion arises out of love for something - a recognition that something must be changed and a commitment to change that which is wrong. Healthy rebellers have goals. They recognize some specific changes that they believe must be made to improve their institutions. Furthermore, they want to be involved in defining the changes that need to be made; they are willing to learn how to make the changes; and they are willing to work hard to achieve these essential changes. They are willing to accept assistance from understanding adults who will listen to them, respect their ideas, and help them develop their resources for achieving their desired changes. They also are willing to accept sensitive adults' ideas and to cooperate with them to achieve their mutual objectives, but they react very negatively to adults who only pretend to cooperate and who really want to manipulate or use them.

> "Unfortunately, many adults seem to assume that rebellion is necessary - that this is the way adolescents achieve their independence - and hence that adults must learn to tolerate it. When significant adults learn to empathize with adolescents, to listen to them when they want to discuss problems, to respect their ideas for resolving problems, to enlist their cooperation in solving problems, to involve them in developing meaningful limits (and to change them and redefine them as they mature), and to expect them to maintain these limits, many of the heartaches and conflicts with which adolescents are confronted in growing up can be avoided. Adolescents can accept from understanding adults information and assistance in learning the skills they need in order to meet their increasing responsibilities (Ohlsen, 1970, pp. 196-97)."

Our Typical Adolescents

For the purposes of this paper the writer classifies secondary school students and most college students as adolescents. Though college students are mature physically, many still are deeply involved in achieving independence. Perhaps, therefore, it would be helpful to review briefly what most adolescents are like before considering how they differ from dissident youth.

The adolescent is trying to determine who he is, to decide what he wants to become, to appraise his chances for achieving his goals, and to develop the will and the self confidence to implement his decisions. He is idealistic and future-oriented. He is trying to learn to face his problems and to develop the self confidence and the skills for solving them. He highly values independence, and still there are times when he wants to be dependent. He usually wants to please his significant others, but he does not always convey this notion to them. He recognizes the value of specific limits (especially when he can define them), and he wants to accept responsibility for maintaining the limits, but he also feels more secure when he knows that his significant others can take over and enforce the limits when he cannot do so. As his referent group shifts from his family, and the institutions which he associates with his family, to his peers, he questions values and behaviors which he previously accepted - especially those which suggest phoniness or hypocrisy on the part of his significant adults (Kirkpatrick, 1952).

Unlike Hall (1904) who described adolescence as a period of storm and stress, Hurloch (1967) used Gesell, Ilg, and Ames' (1956) findings

to support the notion that adolescence could better be described as a period of heightened emotionality. Ausubel (1954) described adolescence as a rigorous testing period. Adolescents have not developed an adequate repertoire of human relations skills to cope with their significant others' confrontations, doubts, and nagging (and unfortunately most adults have not developed these skills). Adolescents tend to be more thin-skinned, to be more irritable, to explode more quickly, to become more excitable, and to be hurt more easily than adults.

Neidt and Fritz (1950) found them to be well-read on national and world affairs, challenged deeply by social problems, and interested in doing something to solve these problems. They thrive on genuine participation and are disappointed when their efforts to make desired changes are not accepted. From his review of the research, Garrison (1965) concluded that much of adolescents' anger results from frustration of some goal-seeking activity. Many feel that they are expected to work for goals which others have assigned them, or at least they are not encouraged and respected for defining their own goals. All of the above tend to make it difficult for adolescents to accept external evaluations of their worth. Besides the resultant tendency to be thin-skinned and to have an authority figure problem, Ackerman (1955) noted their difficulties in developing a relationship with the opposite sex. He reported that nowhere is their rawness and their need to prove themselves more vivid than in the relationship between their sexes. Each is acutely aware of the other and is highly sensitive to the other, but lacks the confident movements of the more experienced, mature adult.

Most adults recall high school and college days as carefree happy times. Perhaps none of us were as carefree as we remember, but it does seem that most of today's youth are less fun-loving than we were. Kavanaugh (1969) noted that prior to the student riots campus life had already become grim --- students are experiencing more freedom and a wide range of activities, but enjoying them less:

> "Perhaps the cause lies in the grimness of contemporary life or in the uncertainty of tomorrow. Perhaps it lies in the pressure for grades or in the frustration experienced as values crumble. No matter what the cause, life without laughter is pained and out of focus. Despite an alleged increase in sexual license and party atmosphere on campus, the cared-for student of today is not the carefree student of other years (p. 51).
>
> " . . . the failure of the home, the school and the church to transmit a sound and solid value system further heightens the expected crisis. Today's student lacks a strong parental figure or deeply indocrinated sense of values to polorize his identity crises. . . . Adoration of the present pervades the campus. The drug user readily admits his need to zero in on the present. . . . This mania to make the present bearable results in an increased preoccupation with death, both in contemplated suicide and in folk music and other art forms. . . (p. 54)."

If youth are less gay than we were, probably it is because they are discouraged by the failures of their significant others' to believe in them, to listen to them, to try to understand them, and to exhibit the caring and to give the time required to teach them the skills they need to realize their potential. Furthermore, their significant others seem not to have conveyed that though society is faced with a host of difficult problems, it has greater resources than ever before for solving its problems - that there is justification for hope.

Dissident Youth

We must understand dissident youth to cope with them and to involve them in solving the conflicts which they have precipitated. We also must

recognize that this is not a new phenomenon. As Levi (1969) noted, however, the student violence in medieval Oxford, Paris, and Bologna resulted either from conflict between student pranksters and townspeople or from conflict between secular and ecclesiastical authorities whereas todays conflict may be more appropriately called a civil war within the academic community. It is a war in which the faculty is involved in the conflict, and divided, and hence cannot serve as a mediator between students and administration.

Riesman and Harris (1969) noted several other elements within our social order which have encouraged student violence: fascination with and admiration of youth, failure to establish and enforce limits and/or doubts about adult authority, large members of youth of identical age, and increasing separation of teenagers from adults. Riesman also noted the college faculty members' role in campus conflicts:

> "I can think of very few colleges that have had student movements without faculty participation. What one finds in some universities is that faculty members have tended to exploit student protest in pursuit of their own grievances or their own settling of scores with administrators (p. 29)."

With this background on the social scene, Levi concluded that there are three very different types of students who have joined forces in campus violence:

> "There is, first, the hard core of radical students whose aim is nothing less than the destruction of the university as prelude to the destruction of an unequal and an unjust society. Represented largely by the SDS - Students for a Democratic Society - (and in France by Daniel Cohn - Bendit and his followers), they are finally convinced that real democratic education is impossible in what they describe as bourgeois, capitalistic society, and they view the university not as something to be reformed, but as something to be destroyed - as perhaps the soft underbelly of a corrupt society, infinitely vulnerable to the concerted attack of their violent intentions (p. 89)."

> "The second class of students who participate in violent protest is considerably larger, relatively unorganized, more heterogeneous and amphorous in its composition. It is made up of those who have a burning concern for such aspects of American foreign policy as the Vietnam War and our defense commitments around the world, as well as our ongoing internal social problems; justice for the black community, poverty as a specifically anchored disgrace, the pageant of American brutility and neglect in its many ugly guises. --- (p. 91)."

> "The last class of student protestors is enormous in number and is composed of almost all the undergraduates and graduate students in the school of arts and sciences. ---This class of third act walk-ons (without a particle of disrespect), I shall call the sheep. ---They asked for an improvement of undergraduate instruction, the adequate recognition by administration and department heads alike of superior teaching skills, a curriculum that should serve the liberal goals of the student as well as the research interest of the teacher, and an end to the manipulative attitudes which seem to have replaced the idea of comradeship among scholars and students (pp. 92-93)."

The first group represents a <u>very</u> small minority on most campuses. Few of the second group want to become involved in violent protests. Most from both group two and three strongly prefer peaceful protests.

Levi's description helps us understand the motives and behaviors of the protestors. Perhaps it would be helpful for us to know something more about their personal characteristics and their family backgrounds. Most such data have been obtained from college students. Astin (1968) described them as follows:

> "For example, compared to the non-activist, the activist student tends to be more intelligent, politically liberal, individualistic, and independent. Activists are more likely than other students to major in social sciences and humanities and less likely to be taking pre-professional programs. They also show more interest in artistic and esthetic pursuits. Compared to the parents of a typical college student, the parents of activists tend to be more highly educated, wealthier, more politically liberal, less religious (in the formal sense of church attendance), and more inclined to be permissive in rearing children (pp. 149-50)."

Barr (1969) labels them as ruthless youth who have been reared by liberal, accepting, and indulgent parents.

> "They (parents) do not disapprove of what their children are doing now. They never have. They are comfortable middle-class people for the most part, many of them professionals - the sort of parents who are anxious to be modern, the sort who reward precocity, who are proud to let their young dine with adult company and dominate the conversation (p. 154)."

Barr also goes in to say that dissident youth have the most extraordinary value of their own opinion, tend to be intolerant of others' views which differ from their own, and tend to be superficially informed on a wide variety of topics but have read with care very little. He feels that they will not learn to exhibit more self control and accept more responsibility until parents quit paying their way. Reisman and Harris agree that youth should be permitted to borrow money to pay for their education, and hence accept some responsibility for it.

Thus, dissident youth feel more hopeless and desperate, have less faith in adults, and see less value in their school experiences than typical youth. They are critical of our economic system. Few of them tend to be enrolled in vocational and/or pre-professional curricula. Probably few have made even tentative career choices. Hence, they cannot relate their studies to their vocational plans.

Recommendations

The situation calls for immediate action by sensitive leaders who respect students' and faculty members' ideas and who are committed to involve them in solving the institution's problems. As Halleck (1968), Hofstadter (1968), and Kavanaugh (1968) suggested, we have no other real choice. Institutions must change. This means changes in local, state,

and federal government and the priorities for their expenditures as well as changes in the administration of schools and colleges. It also means that parents must be taught to assume more responsibility for their children (e.g. parent child rearing seminars, Ohlsen, 1970).

> "We must find a way to communicate those values that are essential to man's survival to our children in an open and questioning but noncynical manner. I doubt that man can live without intimacy, without compassion, without idealogy, without faith, without autonomy, without privacy, and without beauty, and still be man. We must reexamine our time-honored reverence for affluence, power, and bigness and face the possibility that affluence bores, that power corrupts, and that big institutions diminish the structure of man (Halleck, 1968, p. 26)."

Administrators must develop quickly a structure which insures adequate representation for both students and faculty. They also must tell it like it is, encourage representatives to present the problems as they see them, listen to them, and develop with representatives' assistance new guidelines for operating the institution. In such discussions all parties must feel sufficiently secure to criticize current policies and practices, to defend what is, to argue for change, and to admit the threat involved in change. The nature and extent of participation for each can be settled by negotiations. On the other hand, both students and faculty soon recognize that they cannot administer an institution, but they do want to participate even though few will want to participate as much as they think they do before they become involved and discover the time demands. They also want to deal openly with the <u>real issues</u>. Hofstader (1968) said that the situation calls for constructive reform -- not destruction of the present structure. With the kind of openness described above this desired working relationship can be developed.

Genuine involvement is essential. Allport (1945), Bettleheim (1969), Halleck (1968), and Kavanaugh (1968) all support this notion. However, Hofstadter (1968) argued for student influence, not power. For the writer this latter differentiation does not seem to be important. What students need is clearly defined channels through which to present problems and to make their influence felt. They want to be listened to, to make their suggestions and argue their case for their solutions, and to know that their ideas are considered seriously in solving problems and in defining new institutional policies.

Astin (1969) found that likelihood of protest was most likely to occur in those institutions which lacked clear-cut organizational structure and student-faculty involvement in learning. He concluded that the "hand loose" atmosphere encourages students to express dissatisfaction with administrative policies.

The rest of this paper is devoted to techniques which can be used to achieve the goals described above. In order to make this discussion as brief as possible, the writer merely identifies those techniques which can be used by those who wish to follow the recommendations made here.

First of all then, administrators must establish with students' help a type of student government which will encourage students to elect leaders who can and will represent them. Ohlsen (1964) described the essential conditions for such student government and a leadership training program for those who express the need for it.

Student polls can enhance the effectiveness of such student government. Hence, the writer urges administrators to appoint qualified experts to assist a student polling committee to help them develop their

instruments, to select their sample, to plan their interviews, and to analyze their findings. The experts' role is to improve the quality of student polls not to influence the topics or the results. Such polling enables student leaders to discover how fellow students feel on issues and how strongly they feel. Sometimes when students discover how most students really feel, they are less apt to declare an emergency and demand immediate action on problems which perhaps can be solved better with more deliberation.

Levi (1969) gave very precise advice for dealing with his first two groups of protestors: the hard core radicals and those primarily concerned with correcting social justices in society:

For the hard-core radical "--their violence should be dealt with justly, but determinedly. Their arm is not improvement but disruption and their offenses, if continuous, should be met with permanent expulsion from the academic community. --(p. 94)." Bettelheim (1969) agrees, and so does the author.

Provision for student polling can help the administration to deal in particular with these hard-core radicals. Rarely do they have in the beginning the following which they claim. Even when there is some general sympathy for their cause, it is not apt to be as strong as they report. When, however, an administrator over-reacts he often makes martyrs out of these dissidents and consequently rallies general support for them. With the kind of data which a student polling committee can obtain for themselves, or upon request from the staff, an administrator is less apt to make such foolish moves.

Where such hostile students are leading students against the administration, Williams (1969) argued for quick action. For his eight stages in the closing of a university, he concluded that an administrator will achieve his best results when takes action at stage one (when the first set of demands are presented), and that he must act before stage four (when new demands such as a voice in selecting and evaluating staff are made). Obviously best results are obtained within those institutions which already have developed a strong student government, and hence their problems can be faced and resolved in most instances through co-operative efforts before stage one.

> For the social justice protestors, "We have sympathy for your motivation, but your acts are misdirected. For the university is not a political institution nor the underwriter of social policy at large. Your business here is learning in one of the few environments left in the modern world where some objectivity is possible, where freedom of expression and inquiry are actively encouraged, where rational debate is permitted to follow wherever the argument leads. Be thankful for your opportunity and take your violence elsewhere. Do not use it to destroy one of the few remaining centers of liberal democracy in the modern world (Levi, 1969, p. 94)."

Hook (1969) agrees. So do Hofstadter (1968) and the writer, but the latter two do not see the easy separation of social issues from the university issues. When, however, a university (or a secondary school) provides a structure in which students can participate meaningfully in solving problems and in debating social issues, it is very unlikely that many students will participate in violent protests. The structure will provide them with the means which they need to bring their problems to the administration and to negotiate a solution.

For his third group who are merely demanding improved education, Levi pleaded their course as follows:

> "For this is criticism from within, directed to the one thing which we within the university have the power to affect and to improve. Here we all have something at stake and a rededicated faculty and wisely leading administration will do everything in their power to reduce the educational environment to manageable size, to promote fruitful interaction, and to make the campus, indeed a family of learning (p. 95)."

Besides genuine student and faculty participation for improving the schools', colleges', and universities' educational program, what else is required? There are at least three other actions that could be taken to make college students' life more meaningful, and each can be adapted for use with secondary school students: student participation in evaluating and improvement of teaching, organized opportunities for quality group experiences, and improved counseling. In order to achieve these experiences for students, institutions will have to identify or employ qualified personnel to provide essential services for students and to provide leadership training for faculty and students.

Dissident college students have communicated to the administration and faculty a feeling that most college students harbor: "It is not sufficient to present your ideas clearly, to tolerate us, and grade us fairly. We believe that we have a right to expect you to care for us personally, and to learn to communicate this caring." They would like for their professors to help them develop as persons as well as scholars. They would like to live within the kind of community of scholars described by Levi (1969). Most also would like to provide feedback to their professors to help them improve their teaching (rather decide who teach what to whom as some hard-core dissidents have demanded). They also believe that a professor's ability to teach should be the primary factor considered

when he is evaluated for promotion in rank and pay and his case is reviewed for either tenure or dismal.

They also feel very strongly that with reference to his review of the research in teaching, Evans (1969) made several relevant observations for this discussion: students are legitimately concerned about the quality of their education and its relevance to them and about the use of students' evaluations to improve teaching. Merely dealing with the cognitive domain of learning is not sufficient. Professors must recognize the value of and learn to deal with the affective dimensions of learning. T-Groups (Bradford, Gibbs, and Benne, 1969) can be used in in-service education programs to help teachers to deal more adequately with this problem.

Students are searching for meaning in their lives. Today they are not satisfied with planning parties and having fun. Many of them want to explore the issues of today in high-level discussion groups. Schools and colleges can help these students satisfy these needs in voluntary discussion groups in which students are given the primary responsibility (Ohlsen, 1964).

Many feel that their families did not, or no longer can, provide the primary group experiences they desire. Bettelheim (1969) also concluded that college living units are not providing the comradeship which they provided previously. With qualified leaders T-groups (Bradford, Gibb, and Benne, 1964) and sensitivity groups (Schutz, 1967) can help students develop the desired relationships with group members and apply their new learnings in every day living. Unfortunately some such groups have been

organized without such leadership, and they have magnified the problem rather than help solve it.

Finally, improved counseling services are needed in many schools, colleges, and universities. Qualified counselors are needed to help students to deal with the problems with which they seek assistance, to get to know themselves, to locate and evaluate information concerning the opportunities available to them, to make decisions, and to take action to implement their decisions. Counselors must be freed of administrative and clerical duties in order to devote more time for counseling students and to help staff work with their students more effectively. Finally, counselors must not be assigned any disciplinary or evaluative duties which will damage their relationships with either students or staff.

These students are dominated by peers, they want to help fellow students, and they are suspicious of adults. Hence, they tend to respond to group counseling better than to individual counseling. The safe, accepting climate of a counseling group made up of his peers enhances the development of an adolescent's ego strength, his social skills, his political skills, his skills in appraising his own competencies and the opportunities available to him, his efforts to improve communication with his significant others (especially parents, teachers, and employers), his awareness of his new role expectations, and his confidence and skills in living these new roles.

Obviously, these are not new ideas. Competent professionals have understood them, recognized their value, and applied many of these ideas. Today's youth are demanding quality education that requires administration and faculty to apply these ideas now. They will not be satisfied with anything less.

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